



CLEAN WATER ACTION

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Written Testimony of Roger Smith, Campaign Director, Clean Water Action
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Energy and Technology Committee
Tuesday February 26th, 2008

Testimony in support of S.B. 23 AN ACT CONCERNING GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee. Clean Water Action is a non-profit organization with one million members nationwide and 11,000 members in Connecticut. Since 2002 we have coordinated the Connecticut Climate Coalition, a coalition of 90 organizations who support a broad range of initiatives to address global warming.

We are pleased to see the broad, bipartisan support for initiatives to mitigate global warming, and this bill is a good example of that. Many of the policy ideas in this bill will help us achieve an economy-wide carbon cap for Connecticut and should be incorporated into broad climate legislation this year. We currently only have binding emissions limits on the electric sector, which is a good place to start, and that should be broadened so that every part of the economy makes its share of cuts.

Section 1. State Agencies Lead by Example- good start

Since the formation of the Connecticut Climate Coalition in 2002, we have been calling for Connecticut's state government to lead by example by reducing its own emissions. Section 1 of SB 23 calls for each agency to have their own greenhouse gas pollution and energy reduction implementation plans, which we support, but it needs to be more specific. We suggest strengthening this language by adopting already agreed-to goals.

In 2001 all of the New England Governors committed to the following:

Action Item 4: State and Provincial Governments to Lead by Example

Basis for Action

Given the high cost of energy, citizens of New England and Eastern Canada will benefit when they use less energy or use lower carbon fuel to operate our government buildings, vehicles and end-use facilities. In addition, demonstrating energy efficiency, clean energy technologies and sustainable practices should be a fundamental task of government.

Goal

The region will reduce end-use emissions of GHGs through improved energy efficiency and lower carbon fuels within the public sector by 25% by 2012, as measured from an established baseline.

New England Governors-Eastern Canadian Premiers, Climate Change Action Plan 2001, p.11

Each year the Connecticut Climate Coalition and New England Climate Coalition issue a report card grading each of the New England states on their progress towards achieving this goal. Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge Connecticut has yet to establish such a baseline for each agency and require its agencies to create detailed implementation plans to achieve these goals.

The policy directive in Section 1 is a good one and should go further by establishing stringent greenhouse gas reduction targets for all state agencies—we suggest the already agreed-upon 25% by 2012 and deeper reductions by 2020. Letting each agency pick its own target with no incentive for aggressive action is unlikely to spur real change. Additionally, money saved through conservation should be retained by each agencies to be reinvested in other measures to cut greenhouse gas emissions, including efficiency upgrades, green building renovations and cleaner energy generation. Enabling agencies to retain these savings will provide an incentive to do more and make their agencies a better place to work.

In addition, agencies should lead by cleaning up state construction projects:

The state climate plan considers “black carbon” diesel soot a major global warming pollutant and construction activity is one of the largest producers of this pollution. Pollution controls can be retrofit onto construction equipment to cut this pollution over 90%.

Contractors wishing to do business with any Connecticut agency should be required to install “diesel particulate filters” on all equipment by December 31, 2012, after Federal standards go into effect bringing new construction vehicles up to this standard. Between now and 2012 we support creating an early action pollution reduction fund to help pay for filters before they are required. This policy would significantly cut black carbon soot and protect human health.

Section 4: Solar rebate program

Sec. 4. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2008) The Renewable Energy Investments Board, established pursuant to section 16-245m of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes, shall establish a residential photovoltaic rebate program that encourages homeowners to install residential photovoltaic systems. Such program may provide for a rebate of not more than forty thousand dollars. The cost of the program shall be paid from the Renewable Energy Investment Fund.

We strongly support solar incentives to build an in-state solar industry but do not understand this section the way it was drafted. The CT Clean Energy Fund already has a solar rebate program with a rebate cap greater than \$40,000 (it is \$46,500). The current rebate limit is more than adequate and would provide for a system in the 10KW range which would only be suitable for extremely large and high energy consumption homes. We do not think it is necessary to legislate the amount at which rebates should be capped.

If the governor and General Assembly wish to increase their support for solar, we urge increasing the size of the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund as the current limit to Connecticut’s solar potential is the amount of money available to support the solar rebate program. Connecticut has better solar potential than world-leader Germany and could benefit significantly from new investments in distributed, peak-coincident, fuel-free solar PV.

Connecticut should think bigger and join our neighbor Massachusetts in setting aggressive solar goals in megawatts (MA is moving from 4MW to 250MW by 2017)¹ and providing declining rebates to bring solar into the mainstream and help it achieve grid parity. We propose a target of 5% of peak power by 2020 which would put Connecticut on par with California as a leader in solar PV.

Section 6: Green Jobs

Sec. 6. (NEW) (Effective July 1, 2008) (a) There is established a "green collar jobs program", which shall be offered through the state-wide system of regional vocational-technical schools established pursuant to section 10-95 of the general statutes. Such program may include, but not be limited to, training for energy efficient building, construction and building retrofit trades and industries; residential, commercial or industrial energy efficiency assessment; renewable energy technologies; and sustainable climate change and environmental compliance strategies.
(b) Funding for the green collar jobs program shall be made available under the fuel oil conservation account, established pursuant to subdivision (3) of subsection (e) of section 16a-221 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes; the Energy Conservation and Load Management Fund, established pursuant to subsection (b) of section 16-245m of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes; and the account established pursuant to subsection (b) of section 16-32f of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes. Funding for the program shall not exceed one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2008.

Clean Water Action strongly supports a focus on creating new "green" jobs in Connecticut related to energy efficiency, clean energy and clean transportation. This section is a good start but does not go far enough. First, the funding source- the fuel oil conservation account- is far from secure and not an appropriate source for funding for a multi-sector program. A strong green jobs program should provide types of training for workers of different levels of skill, connect existing job-training programs, especially in our inner cities, as well as at community colleges, vo-tech schools, and the state university system. This training should be supported financially by the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund and Connecticut Clean Energy Fund (and other relevant state agencies) as both Funds have access to green technology equipment, the ability to research and recommend state-of-the art curricula, and have relationships with the businesses implementing efficiency and clean energy projects who need more employees.

We suggest contacting and coordinating efforts with Gateway Community College's Dr. David Cooper on his proposed *The Center for a Sustainable Future*, as his school could perhaps help coordinate the various entities in this effort.

Section 7: Motor Bus idling

We support anti-idling initiatives but do not understand how this section differs from existing statute. Connecticut already has a 3 minute no-idling law for all vehicles. The best way to discourage unnecessary idling is through the threat of enforcement. The best way to achieve this is to make the anti-idling law enforceable by state and local police and not just the DEP and DMV.

Thank you,
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Campaign Director Clean Water Action

¹ http://www.masstech.org/renewableenergy/news/clip_01_28_08.html

